

Summary of Proposed Charter Amendments

August 9, 2006

The Seattle City Council has approved eleven Resolutions that propose Charter amendments to submit to the voters of Seattle in November 2006. The Seattle City Charter was adopted at the general election on March 12, 1946, and has been amended numerous times since. It can be amended only by a vote of the people. The eleven proposed amendments are listed below. In some cases, the Council adopted companion legislation related to the proposed Charter amendments.

1. Resolution 30888: Permits the Council to hold its regular meeting in an alternate location in the event of an emergency or disaster, as permitted by state law.

The Council also approved companion Resolution 30905, which would amend the Council Rules and Procedures regarding the definitions of “emergency” and “disaster” if the proposed Charter amendment is approved by the voters.

2. Resolution 30898: Clarifies what constitutes a Council quorum in three situations: regular circumstances, when there is a vacancy, and when the Mayor declares an emergency.

3. Resolution 30894: Provides for the reappointment and reconfirmation of department heads every four years, for three of the department head positions created in the Charter (Finance, Parks and Personnel). The reappointment and reconfirmation of incumbents, if any, would first take place on February 1, 2011.

The Council also adopted two other pieces of legislation about the reappointment and reconfirmation of department heads:

Council Bill 115645 provides for the reappointment and reconfirmation every four years of the department heads created in Seattle Municipal Code that are not already subject to reconfirmation (Executive Administration, Fleets and Facilities, Human Services, Information Technology, Seattle Center). The reappointment and reconfirmation of incumbents, if any, would first take place on June 1, 2010. This bill is not dependent on the passage of a Charter amendment to become effective.

Resolution 30903 establishes a process and criteria for reconfirmation of department heads.

4. Resolution 30896: Amends the Charter to change the appointment authority for the City Auditor from the Chair of the City Council Finance Committee to a majority of City Council members, and reduces the Auditor’s term of office from six years to four years.

The Council also adopted a companion **Council Bill 115643**, which would amend the Seattle Municipal Code regarding the Auditor position to match the Charter amendment if it is approved.

5. Resolution 30897: Amends the Charter to state that the appointment authority for Seattle Planning Commission members shall be provided by ordinance.

The Council also adopted a companion **Council Bill 115644**, which would amend the Seattle Municipal Code regarding the appointment authority for Planning Commission members if the proposed Charter amendment is approved. The Municipal Code would state that the Council appoints seven Planning Commission members, the Mayor appoints seven members, and a fifteenth member is appointed by the Commission as constituted.

6. Resolution 30893: Clarify that the effective date for a successful ballot measure is five days after election results are certified, rather than five days after the election.

7. Resolution 30895: Allows all Councilmembers (elected *or* appointed) to vote on proposed Charter amendments.

8. Resolution 30890: Brings the Charter section about the publication of “other” ballot measures into conformity with other sections dealing with publication of ballot measures, which were amended in 2002.

9. Resolution 30891: Changes the requirement for the City Clerk to compile passed ordinances for public access by deleting the requirement for producing an annual bound book of those ordinances that are printed each year in the City's official newspaper.

10. Resolution 30889: Corrects outdated references to “Comptroller” by changing them to “Clerk”.

11. Resolution 30892: Deletes obsolete references to a Charter section that was repealed many years ago.